

2 REGIONAL CONTEXT AND PLANNING

Introduction

The following section gives an overview of the regional and local planning efforts. Also included is information related to population and demographics, environmental resources, transportation, bicycle and pedestrian links, and recreation.

Population and Demographics

The City of Fayetteville, with a population of approximately 174,000, is the largest city in the region and the fifth largest metro area in the state. The Town of Spring Lake has a population of approximately 8,200. On September 1, 2008, the Town of Spring Lake annexed Pope Air Force Base and portions of the Fort Bragg Range and Training Area.

The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) and the Global Defense Posture Realignment initiatives are impacting Fort Bragg and the surrounding region with a large surge of population growth. The Preliminary Impact Assessment for the region prepared by the BRAC task force in 2008 projected population growth for the 11 counties in the region. According to the 2008 census, the region was home to just under 950,000 people. The BRAC assessment predicted that the region would grow to a total population of over one million people by 2013 as a result of the base realignment and other growth initiatives.

Land Use Planning

Within the study area, several municipalities have planning jurisdiction, including Cumberland County, Harnett County, Town of Spring Lake and the City of Fayetteville. Cumberland County has jurisdiction over much of the study area and provides land use and transportation planning as well as zoning and subdivision administration. A small portion of Long Valley Farm is within Harnett County, and a small portion of the study area is within the City of Fayetteville.

The Cumberland County 2030 Joint Growth Vision Plan was developed to assist local governments in creating policies and growth strategies for economic development and land use within the region.

The Long Range Component of Fort Bragg's Real Property Master Plan (2008) assesses existing facilities and infrastructure and develops a long range land use plan for Fort Bragg. This document refers to several partners in planning such as BRAC Regional Task Force, Sustainable Sandhills, the N.C. Conservation Partnership, the Fort Bragg/Pope Air Force Base Regional Land Use Advisory Commission, Inc., Sandhills Conservation Partnership, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and others.

The Fort Bragg/Pope Air Force Base Regional Land Use Advisory Commission is a regional planning organization that serves as a forum to encourage better planning and communication between local governments, municipalities and Fort Bragg. One of its initiatives included the purchase of the Overhills Estate in 1997 to expand training areas and protect Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force



New construction in the region



Longleaf pine habitat at Fort Bragg

Base from urban encroachment. The purchase also provided additional land for conservation and restoration.

The Sustainable Sandhills initiative includes stakeholders from six counties in the region, Fort Bragg, as well as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The steering committee's main goals include awareness and education, eco-tourism and supporting local agriculture, creating cultural connections, green business and design, land planning, and recycling.

Environmental Resources

The Sandhills region is home to many endangered or threatened plant and animal species, most notably the Red-cockaded Woodpecker. A variety of public lands are located in the area including Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve and the Sandhills Game Lands.

The Fort Bragg Greenbelt is primarily located to the south of Fort Bragg. It includes 6,500 acres of perimeter land set aside for buffer and conservation.

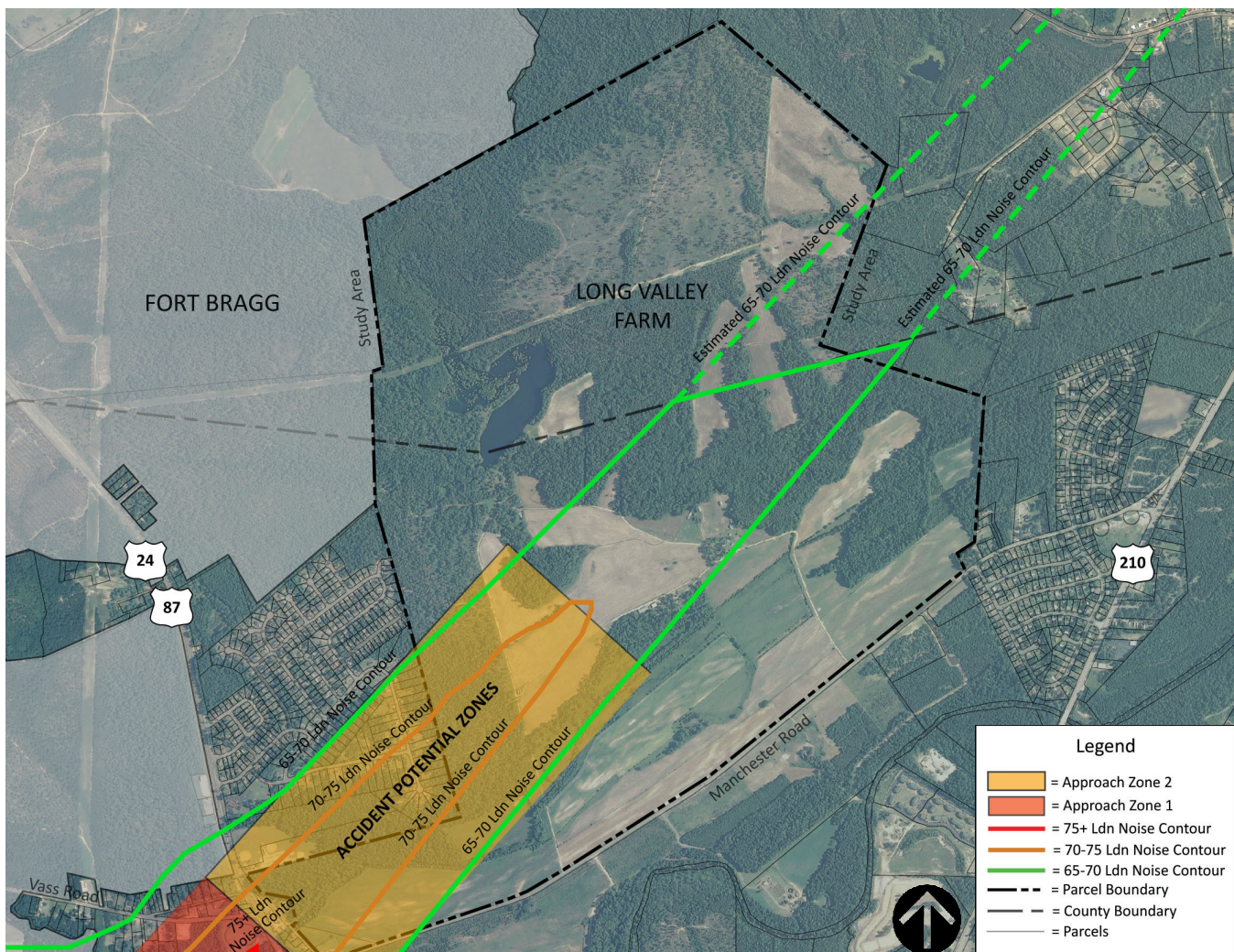


Figure 2.1 Long Valley Farm Noise Contours and Accident Potential Zones - Not to Scale

Fort Bragg intends to extend the Greenbelt around the northern portion of the base in the future. The Long Valley Farm property lies within the proposed northern Greenbelt area.

Fort Bragg/Pope Air Force Base Noise Impacts

On any given day of the week, approximately 200 takeoffs and landings occur at Pope Air Force Base, with noise impacts on the Long Valley Farm property. On a busy day, 216 flights are possible. On average, a takeoff or landing is occurring 11 to 13 times an hour. Long Valley Farm is also impacted by the Potential Accident Zone II which is shown on Figure 2.1. It is not expected that development at Long Valley Farm will be incompatible with this zone, however, noise impacts should be taken into consideration.



*Flight pattern over Long Valley Farm
Agricultural Complex*

Regional Transportation

The Fayetteville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (FAMPO) released a 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan for Cumberland County, a small section of southern Harnett County, as well as part of Hoke County in April 2009. The cities and towns included in the area are Fayetteville, Spring Lake, Hope

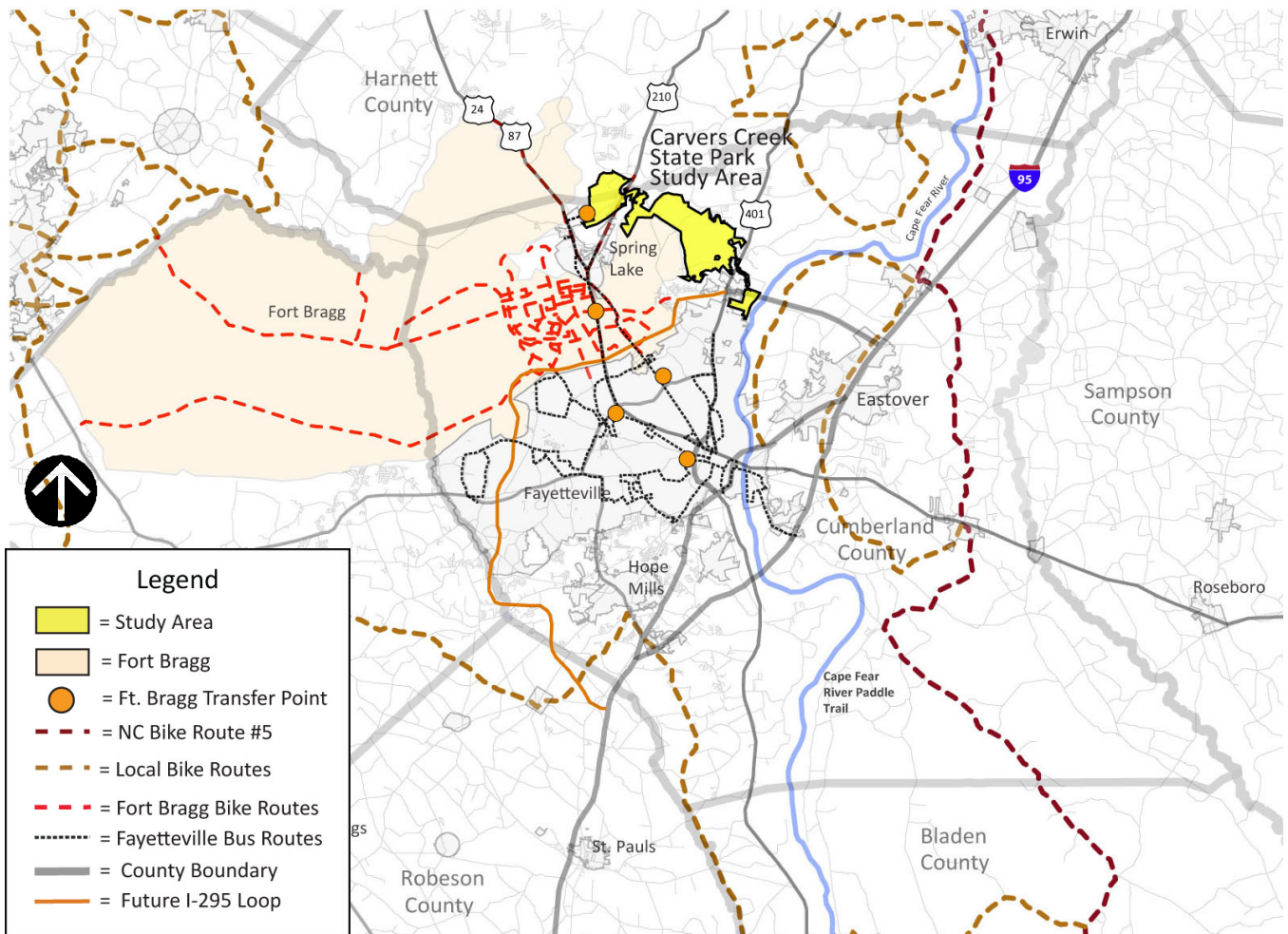


Figure 2.2 - Regional Map - Transportation - Not to Scale



Cape Fear River Trail

Mills, as well as the Fort Bragg Military Reservation and Pope Air Force Base. In anticipation of continued development and increased population, the plan includes infrastructure, bicycle and pedestrian, transit and rail improvements in the region. See Figure 2.2 for Regional Map of Transportation.

The regional plan highlights several proposed new roads and road widening projects. Within the study area, FAMPO has identified McCloskey Road, Andrews Road, portions of McArthur Road, Elliot Farm Road, Elliot Bridge Road, and Ramsey Street (Highway 401) as roads in need of widening to accommodate future capacity. Each of these roads have the possibility of affecting the transportation circulation throughout the study area.

The future I-295 outer loop will serve as a critical transportation link for the region. The extension will improve access to I-95, offering a direct route for those in the Fort Bragg and Spring Lake area. Although located to the south of the study area, the outer loop will improve connectivity in the region.

Public Transportation

Fayetteville's transit system, Fayetteville Area System of Transit (FAST), links the city with a series of bus routes and shuttles. Fort Bragg has a shuttle bus system and provides a transfer point at Murchison Road, allowing connection to the FAST system.

Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian Trails, and Greenways

Currently, no bike lanes are provided on roads in the park study area. Several road projects under the NC DOT Transportation Improvement Program were approved to include bike lanes. Ramsey Street (Highway 401) has been identified as a proposed bicycle corridor, and could eventually provide a connection to state park property.

Two mountain bike trails are located on Fort Bragg, both average seven to eight miles in length. Several "unofficial" on-road bike routes are used by local citizens for group rides.

Fort Bragg has identified proposed bicycle paths in order to create connections to surrounding municipalities. These paths have the potential to become part of a greater alternative transportation network, and perhaps link to the state park.

Recreational trails at Fort Bragg include the Coscom Trail (0.64 miles), the Engineer Trail (1.55 miles), the Son Tay Trail (2.45 miles), and the Smith Lake Trail (6.10 miles). See Figure 2.3 for Regional Map of Trails, Greenways and Parks.

Presently, no greenways are provided in the study area, however, FAMPO is working on a planning document that will investigate possible pedestrian and bicycle connections in the region, linking routes with those that already exist in Fayetteville. Several of these routes may be identified in the park study area.

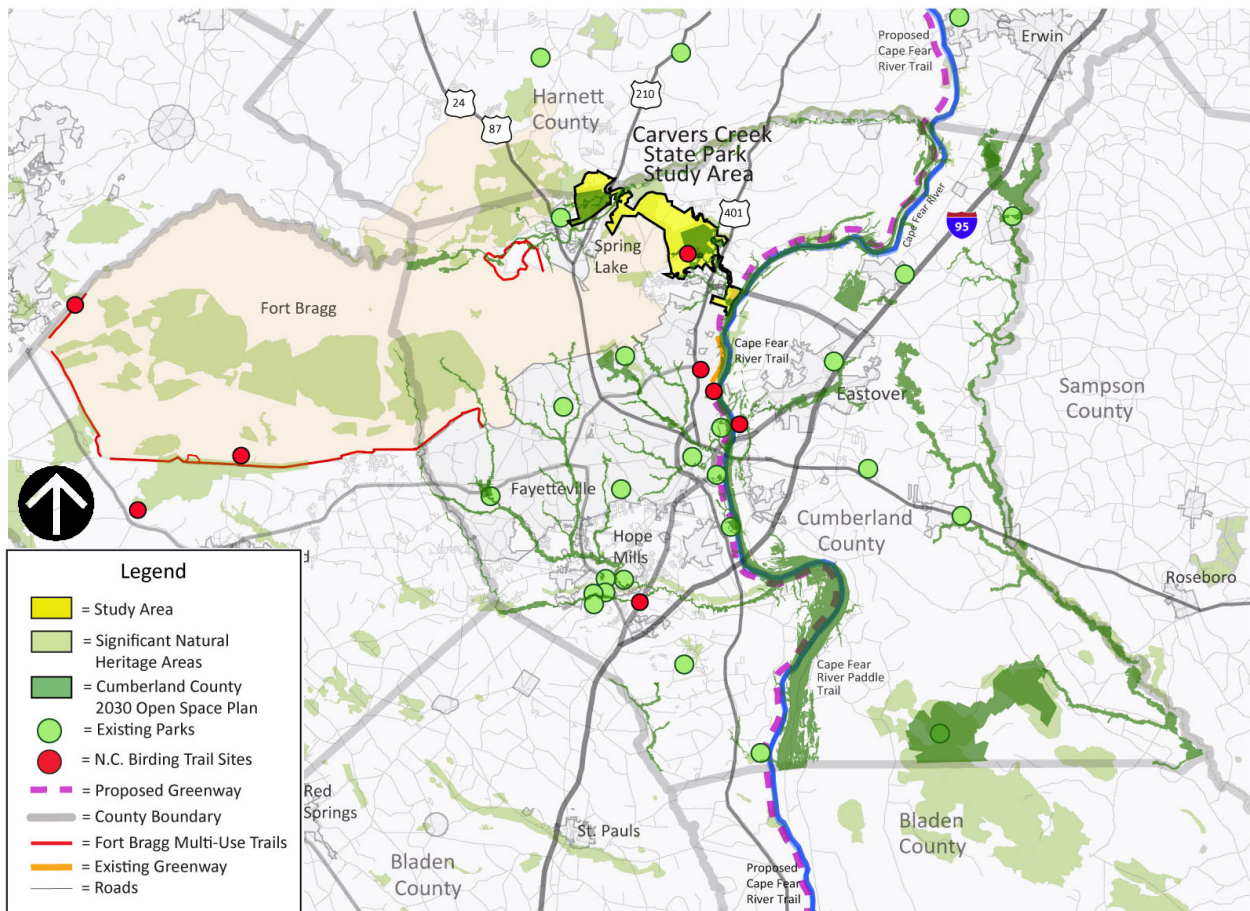


Figure 2.3 Regional Map - Trails, Greenways and Parks - Not to Scale

The Cape Fear River Trail is a multi-use trail that is designated as a part of the East Coast Greenway. The East Coast Greenway is designed to be the nation's first long distance, multi modal transportation corridor for cyclists, hikers and non-motorized users and will eventually connect from Maine to Florida. The local section of the East Coast Greenway is comprised of a 4.2-mile series of urban trails in Fayetteville. The existing portion of the trail along the Cape Fear River will provide a future link to the park.

The Cape Fear Run/N.C. Bike Route is a 160-mile bike route that roughly parallels the course of the Cape Fear River through the southeast coastal plain to the Atlantic Ocean. Points of interest along the route include Jones Lake State Park, Moore's Creek National Military Park, the USS North Carolina Battleship Memorial, Brunswick Town State Historic Site, Carolina Beach State Park, and Fort Fisher State Recreation Area. Although this route is located to the east of the Cape Fear River and is not currently within the study area, linkages could be made in the future.

The North Carolina Coastal Paddle Trail begins at the J. Bayard Clark Park in Fayetteville and stretches through the coastal plain of North Carolina to Southport. Paddlers can enjoy birding, fishing, exploring historic sites and visiting small communities along the river.

The North Carolina Birding Trail is a virtual trail that links existing bird watching sites across the state, connecting birders with local communities, businesses and other cultural and educational attractions. Four sites in Cumberland County are represented on the Piedmont section of the Trail; J. Bayard Clark Park, the Cape Fear River Trail, Cape Fear Botanical Garden, and Carvers Creek State Park.

Parks and Recreation

Some of the existing parks in the region include Lake Rim Park, Arnette Park, Mazarick Park, J. Bayard Clark Park, the Cape Fear Botanical Gardens and Mendoza Park. Refer to Figure 2.3 for Regional Map of Trails, Greenways and Parks.

Lake Rim Park is a 30-acre community park located on Tar Kiln Drive in Fayetteville. The park offers picnicking, walking trails, and ranger-guided environmental tours emphasizing wetlands, the historic naval stores industry, animal adaptation, and water quality.

Arnette Park is a 100-acre regional park located on Old Wilmington Road in Fayetteville. Arnette Park consists of baseball fields, sand volleyball courts, a concession stand, horseshoe pits, disc golf, picnic pavilions, a playground, tennis courts, nature trails, restrooms, and natural woodlands.

Milton E. Mazarick Park is an 80-acre regional park located on Belvedere Avenue in Fayetteville. Mazarick Park is mainly a recreational venue, offering a softball field, concession stand, fishing pier, rowboat rental, trails, playground, tennis courts, and disc golf.

J. Bayard Clark Park is a 76-acre regional park located on Sherman Drive in Fayetteville. The primary focus of Clark Park is to preserve the environment and educate the public about native plants and wildlife. Clark Park is staffed by park rangers who lead frequent school visits and educational workshops. The park consists of a Nature Center, walking trails, a trail head for the Cape Fear River Trail, primitive camping and a canoe launch. The park also has a 35-foot waterfall, which some say is the tallest waterfall in North Carolina's Coastal Plain.

The Cape Fear Botanical Garden is located at 536 N. Eastern Boulevard in Fayetteville. The garden is maintained by staff and volunteers, and serves as a prime location for community events.

Mendoza Park is located in the Town of Spring Lake on Hwy. 87 just south of the Cumberland/Harnett county line and adjacent to Long Valley Farm. Mendoza Park offers baseball/softball fields, picnic areas, a playground, a large open space area, walking trails, seating areas, and concessions.

Fort Bragg's Family and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Directorate operates several recreational amenities including Smith Lake Recreation Park, Wilson Park, two golf courses, 11 gyms and several trails. Smith Lake Recreation Park is located one mile outside of Fort Bragg on Hwy 210 (Murchison Road) near Simmons Army Airfield, and is open to the public. The park includes camping



Mendoza Park - town of Spring Lake

(RV and cabins), mountain bike trails, paint ball facilities, riding stables, volleyball, shelters, swimming area, beach, and playground.

Wilson Park is located off Butner Road in Fort Bragg and is open to the public. Facilities include picnic shelters, playgrounds, restrooms as well as a fishing dock on McFayden Pond.

Recreational Needs Analysis of the Region

The National Survey of Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) interviewed approximately 90,000 Americans in random-digit-dialing telephone samplings between 2002 and 2007. Of those 90,000 surveyed, approximately 3,000 were North Carolina residents. The primary purpose of the NSRE is to learn about approximately 85 specific outdoor recreation activities of people aged 16 and over in the United States. In general, North Carolina residents have fairly high participation rates in most outdoor recreation activities. This is due in part to a combination of abundant recreation resources and a reasonable climate which allows for a wide range of outdoor experiences.

According to the 2002-2007 NSRE, the five most popular outdoor recreational activities in North Carolina are walking for pleasure, attending family gathering outdoors, visiting nature centers, sightseeing, and picnicking.

Walking is the single most popular activity, with over five million participants statewide. The second most popular activity is attending outdoor family gatherings (also with over five million participants). Other activities with over three million participants include picnicking, gardening, driving for pleasure, viewing or photographing natural scenery, visiting nature centers, attending outdoor sports events, and sightseeing.

Activities with roughly 1.5 to 3.0 million participants include attending outdoor concerts, playing yard games, day hiking, running or jogging, visiting a wilderness area or historic site, viewing or photographing wildflowers and trees, visiting a beach, swimming in lakes and streams, motor boating, swimming in outdoor pools, boating and fishing. Those activities with roughly 500,000 to 1 million participants include primitive camping, hunting, backpacking, cold water fishing, tennis, and golf.

Outdoor recreation in a developed area is by far the most popular form of recreation in North Carolina. More residents participate in walking for pleasure (82 percent) and attending outdoor family gatherings (74.6 percent) than any other overall activity. Other activities, such as gardening or landscaping (65.4 percent), or driving for pleasure (58.2 percent) are also favorites with North Carolina residents.

Visiting wilderness areas is the most popular nature-based land activity (29.8 percent) in the state of North Carolina. Hiking is also a popular activity (29.7 percent) and visiting a farm or agricultural setting continues to be a popular activity with roughly a third of residents participating. Just over 20 percent of state residents also indicate an interest in driving off-road and participating in developed camping. The somewhat specialized, technical outdoor pursuits usually requiring special gear like rock climbing and mountain climbing are

among the least popular nature-based land activities with only 5 percent or less participating.

Statewide, the largest percentage of residents participating in viewing or learning activities are viewing or photographing natural scenery (57 percent), followed by visiting outdoor nature centers and zoos (52.9 percent). Over half of state residents have gone sightseeing within the last year, while just under half visited historic sites or viewed wildlife or wildflowers.

Close to half of North Carolina's residents visit beaches and nearly 40 percent go swimming in pools, lakes or streams. In addition, between 20 percent to 30 percent of residents have participated in some type of boating or fishing.

Individual outdoor sports continue to be popular, with over a quarter of North Carolina residents running and jogging (28.3 percent). Tennis (14.8 percent) and golf (13.9 percent) were also somewhat popular with North Carolina residents. It is worth noting that almost 10 percent of residents also enjoy inline skating.

Team sports have seen a decline in participation in recent years. Less than 10 percent of North Carolina's residents indicate participation in an outdoor team sports activity within the last year.

Fayetteville/Cumberland County 2005 Parks and Recreation Survey

In 2005, a survey of residents from portions of Cumberland County (not including Fort Bragg, Pope Air Force Base and the Town of Spring Lake) was conducted to determine current and future park and recreation needs as well as to determine how these services could be funded. 403 random telephone interviews were conducted using a questionnaire.

Over 70 percent of respondents currently use a public park in Cumberland County, and residents older than 55 were least likely to have used park facilities. Most park users visit parks quite often; 50 percent indicate that they visited between six and 50 times per year.

Most respondents indicated that they use parks most often for walking or jogging. Picnicking, visiting playgrounds, and visiting museums or historic properties are also popular activities. Interest in activities such as swimming (30 percent), fishing (29 percent), and camping or hiking (28 percent) were also noted.

The four leading activities were walking/jogging (88 percent), picnicking (87 percent), visiting museums or historic properties (87 percent), and attending concerts and performing arts events (80 percent). Nature or environmental programs were also popular (71 percent). Based on the percentage of those interested in walking, jogging, and picnicking, there is a further indication that visiting museums or historic properties would be quite popular. The establishment of greenways and senior centers also appears to have strong support.



Jogging and walking are popular activities in North Carolina

Regional Land Use

The study area falls under the zoning jurisdictions of Cumberland County, Harnett County, the city of Fayetteville and the town of Spring Lake. See Figure 2.4 for the Zoning Map on the following page.

Long Valley Farm is zoned Rural Residential in both Cumberland County and Harnett County. According to the Cumberland County zoning codes, the Rural Residential district is traditionally for rural use with lots of 20,000 square feet or more. The principal use of the land in this district is for low-density residential, including manufactured housing units, and agricultural purposes. This district is intended to ensure that residential development not having access to public water supplies and dependent upon septic tanks for sewage disposal will occur at a sufficiently low density to provide for a healthy environment. Long Valley Farm borders the town of Spring Lake, but is under county jurisdiction. The tract is bounded by Rural Residential to the north (in Harnett County), Residential to the east (in Cumberland County), military use to the south, and Residential to the west.

The Sandhills Section is zoned Planned Neighborhood Development. According to the Cumberland County zoning code, a Planned Neighborhood District is a conditional use district designed for the planned development of various residential densities concurrent with neighborhood-oriented uses in a single project. The Sandhills Section is bounded by Planned Neighborhood Development, Residential and Agricultural to the north, Planned Neighborhood Development to the east, Residential and Planned Neighborhood Development to the south, and military use to the west.

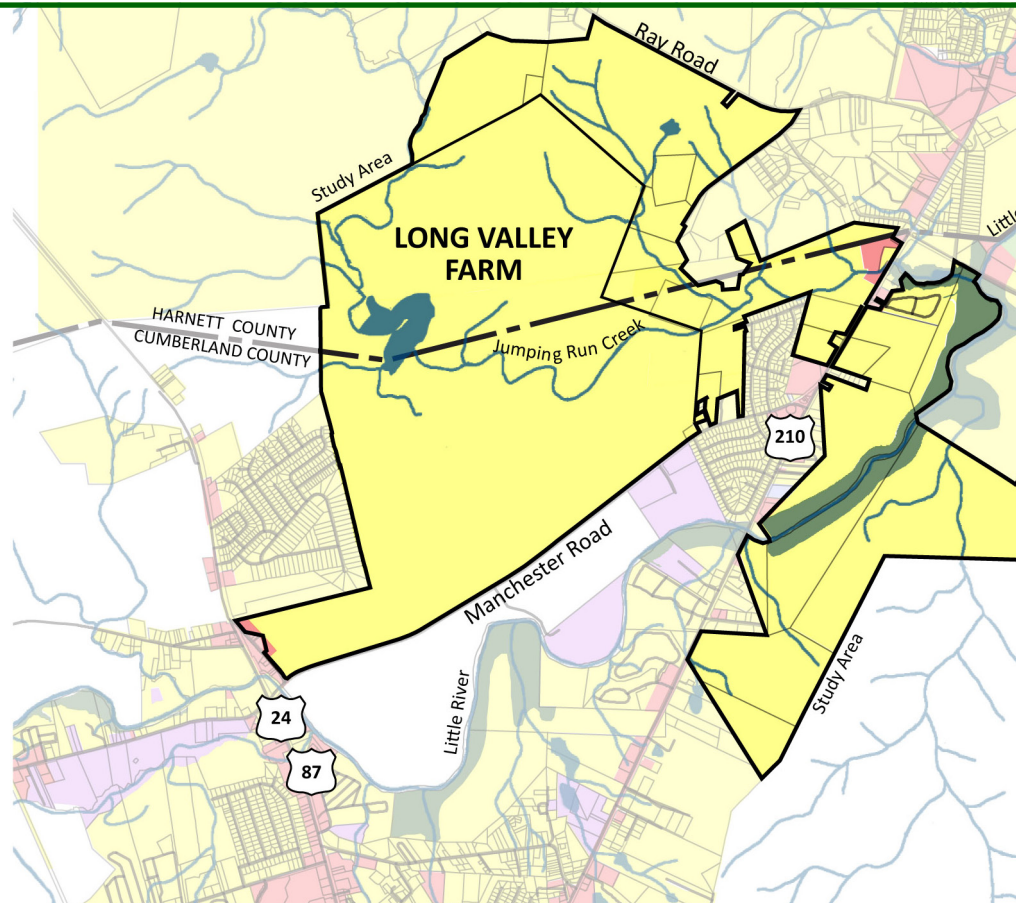
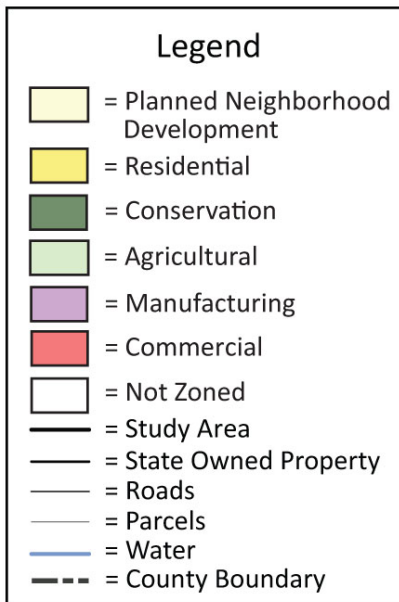
North Carolina has rapidly lost farmland over the past decade. Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Lee and Moore counties are all experiencing a very high rate of farmland and forest conversion to residential development. The rapid development of these areas is fragmenting the Sandhills' ecosystem, as well as changing the rural character, sense of place and quality of life of the region.

Analysis of Regional Context and Planning

The area is rapidly urbanizing. The base realignment at Fort Bragg will result in a large population increase, and the rural character of the study area will likely change. Connectivity between these large population areas and points of interest will be increasingly important for recreational opportunities in the region.

Several planning organizations coordinate with local municipalities to ensure that all stakeholders are part of the long-range planning, making sure that important cultural and natural resources are preserved for future generations. The conservation partners in the area and the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation will mutually benefit from these relationships.

Many regional opportunities exist for connections to transportation routes, bicycle and greenway connections, and parks and recreation resources. As the region continues to grow, these connections will become more important to the Sandhills.



According to recreation surveys and need assessments for both the state of North Carolina and Cumberland County, the most popular outdoor activities could be easily accommodated within the study area. These include walking, attending a family gathering, visiting nature centers and participating in environmental programs, picnicking, attending concerts and performing arts events, and visiting museums or historic properties.

The Zoning Map, Figure 2.4, shows that the study area is mostly zoned Residential, with small areas of Conservation and Commercial.

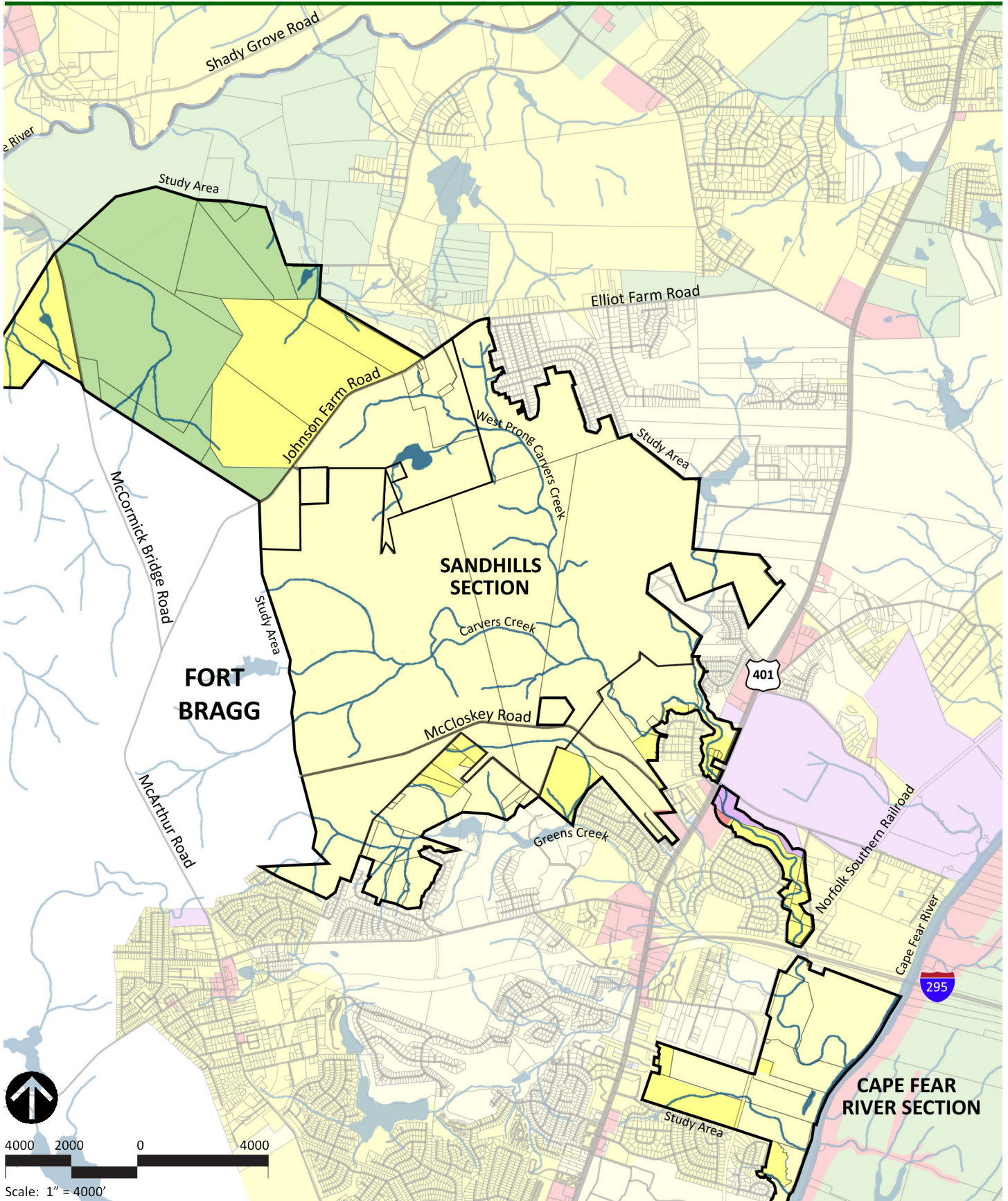


Figure 2.4 - Zoning Map